

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Homeric Hymns: Interpretative Essays*. Edited by Andrew FAULKNER. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xv + 400. Hardcover, £84.00/\$160.00. ISBN 978-0-19-958903-6.

This collection of essays is the result of a collaboration of leading scholars and young researchers in the field of archaic Greek literature and oral poetics. The term “collaboration” fits particularly well within the context of a fertile debate ongoing throughout the book. Contributions were coordinated by A. Faulkner, author of both a history of modern scholarship on the *Homeric Hymns* (1–25) and a chapter on the constitution of the collection (175–205).

Faulkner’s analysis focuses on the terminology employed in scholiastic and literary sources that refer to the hymns as a corpus. The collection dates back at least to the third century A.D., a *terminus post quem* given by the eighth hymn, here taken as a later Neoplatonic, rather than an Orphic, addition (p. 175–6). Faulkner persuasively illustrates the influence of specific passages from *Demeter*, *Apollo*, *Hermes* and *Aphrodite* on the Callimachean hymns (with the exception of *Delos*). On the basis of the probable allusion of Call. *Iov.* 4–8 to the first Homeric Hymn to *Dionysus* (A 2–6 West), he posits a knowledge by Callimachus of an ordered collection of hymns where *Dionysus* came first.

This idea is supported by M. L. West in his article on the fragmentary first Homeric Hymn (29–43, esp. 40–1). West’s contribution<sup>1</sup> complements his Loeb edition (*Homeric Hymns, Apocrypha, Lives*, Cambridge MA, 2003, 26–31), by providing a reconstruction of the mythical content of fragments A–D. With regard to the episode of Hera enchained on her throne by Hephaestus, particularly attractive is his hypothesis of a dependence of Alcaeus fr. 349 a–e on the first Homeric Hymn, which would make *Dionysus* the earliest hymn of the collection (33–4).

<sup>1</sup> This chapter partially overlaps with West’s “The Fragmentary Homeric Hymn to Dionysus,” *ZPE* 134 (2001) 1–11.

N. Richardson's essay on the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (44–58) is conceived as an update of his 1978 edition in light of the subsequent contributions.<sup>2</sup>

M. Chapell's lucid and well-grounded contribution on the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (59–81) presents itself as a refutation of Clay's arguments in favor of the hymn's internal unity and coherence, and consequently of its Panhellenic outlook (*The Politics of Olympus*, 18–19, 47–9, 92–4). Chappell conditionally accepts M. L. West's theory (*Homeric Hymns*, 10–12) of a combination of an original Pythian hymn, to which the rhapsode Cynaethus of Chios added a new, much longer Delian section in conjunction with his performance at the festival on Delos celebrated by Polycrates of Samos in 523 (67–73).

The genesis of the conflation is reversed in G. Nagy ("The Earliest Phases of the Reception of the Homeric Hymns," 280–333, esp. 288–91), according to whom Cynaethus would have augmented an original Homeric hymn by adding a rival Hesiodic hymn praising the Pythian Apollo at the *Delia*. Cynaethus would have subsequently "attributed" (*ἀνατέθεικεν*) the whole composition to Homer (*schol. Pind. N. 2.1c* = Hippostr. *FGrHist* 568 F 5). This interpretation of *ἀνατίθημι* is shared by West (*Homeric Hymns*, p. 10: "laid it to his credit") and supported by parallels such as *schol. Pind. P. 6.22* and *schol. Eur. Hipp. 264*.

A. Vergados' study on the *Hymn to Hermes* (p. 82–104) anticipates his forthcoming long-awaited commentary, which will hopefully cast new light on the hymn's numerous textual difficulties.<sup>3</sup> Vergados notes that the *Hymn to Hermes* lacks a proper epiphany scene, an element which is shared by the longer hymns (although there is none in the Delian *Hymn to Apollo*). According to Vergados, the divine epiphany, while not narrated, is "enacted in the god's performance"

<sup>2</sup> J. Clay, *The Politics of Olympus* (Princeton, 1989) 15–16, 267–70 on the couple Demeter–Persephone promoted by Zeus as official members of the Olympian society; H. P. Foley, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Princeton, 1994) 104–14 on the rape of Kore as paradigmatic of human marriage; K. Clinton, *Myth and Cult: The Iconography of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Stockholm, 1992) 13–37, 96–9, 116–20); and R. Parker, "The *Hymn to Demeter* and the *Homeric Hymns*," *G&R* 38 (1991) 1–17 on the cultic framework of the hymn, which may reflect some stage in the cult of Demeter at Eleusis or may be seen as providing an aetiological myth for the Thesmophoria.

<sup>3</sup> Just to mention a few: the apparent loss of textual material after lines 91 and 416; the *cruces* in 325 and 473 of Richardson's edition; at line 48 for the unattested *λιθορρίνιοι* conjectured by West one could suggest *λιπορρίνιοι* "greasy-skinned," the marrow having just being gouged out of the turtle.

(86, 104): playing the part of a humorous and crafty inventor, the god establishes a special link with the audience through the alter-ego of the poet.

P. Brillet-Dubois (105–32) investigates the narrative structure of the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, recognizing a sequence of six scenes (divine motivation; preparation; journey; encounter; intercourse; aftermath) that mirrors the narrative of the Iliadic *aristeia* performed by Achilles, thus enhancing the cosmogonic and laudatory potential of the hymn. The scene of the preparation in *Cypria* fr. 5 might indeed precede the judgment of Paris,<sup>4</sup> but no element in the surviving fragments seems to point to an “indirect” intercourse following a seduction scene, where “Aphrodite substitutes Helen for herself as Paris’ lover” (110).

In his reading of the seventh *Homeric Hymn to Dionysius* (133–50), D. Jaillard analyzes words that are allusive of the Dionysiac *thauma* (but see Cassola on 7, *οἴνοπα πόντον*), concluding that the epiphanic motif, while being the object of the narration, also structures the narrative itself. The element of the divine scent occurring in 36–7 is not a prerogative of Dionysius (cf. e.g. *Hermes*, 231–2), but might be paralleled in P.Mich. III 139.2 = *SH* 906.2 (if the action in 11 is performed under Dionysiac frenzy). Jaillard’s interpretation of *σχήματα* ’Ολύμπου as “structures of the pantheon” (138) is doubtful, and differs from both West’s (*ad Eumelus* fr. 13) and Bernabé’s (*ad Tytanomachia* fr. 11.2).

O. Thomas focuses on the techniques of composition and the peculiar structure of the nineteenth *Homeric Hymn to Pan* (151–72), a hymn marked by two inset nymph-songs and lacking a central narrative. Thomas singles out a possible dependence of the second song on the beginning of the fourth *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, which would provide a firm *terminus post quem* (165–7). The mention of the spouse (?) of Dryops at 34 is taken as a starting point for a discussion of the original place of composition (the region of Doris, from where the Dryopes were expelled, or the destinations of the diaspora: Ambracia, southern Euboea, or eastern Argolid).

W. D. Furley (“Homeric and Un-Homeric Hexameter Hymns,” 206–31), in agreement with N. Richardson (*The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 3–4) and in contrast with Allen and Halliday (xciv–xcv), confirms the theory of the *Homeric Hymns* as *prooimia*, preludes to epic recitations to be performed by rhapsodes in contests. The transitional formula “I will pass over to another song” occurring at the end of Hymns 5, 9 and 18 is differently interpreted by G. Nagy (327–9), who takes *ἄλλον ἐς ὕμνον* to mean “the rest of the [not “another”] song.” According

<sup>4</sup> See already F. G. Welcker, *Der epische Cyclus* (Bonn 1865–82) II.88–91.

to Nagy the hymnic salutation *χαῖρε/χαίρετε* activates the process of transition and guarantees a reciprocal pleasure between the poet/audience and the god, and, consequently, a successful reception of a piece of literature or an orally transmitted composition. This concept of reciprocal rejoicing is fully developed in C. Calame's essay "The Homeric Hymns as Poetic Offerings: Musical and Ritual Relationships with the Gods" (334–57), which explains the *Hymns* as offerings made by mortals ritually "sacrificing" their songs, becoming the objectification of a poetic contract between gods and mortals.

J. Clay's "The Homeric Hymns as a Genre" (232–53) closely follows the path of her *Politics of Olympus*, such that it can be seen as an expansion of that volume's chapter "The Hymnic Moment." Clay's theory of a collection of texts portraying a mythological conflict leading to the re-distribution of power is challenged (although not rejected, see esp. 209, 225) by W. Furley, who stresses the importance of the authorial innovation and humanization of the ancestral divinities as elements of distinction for the creation of a genealogical and theogonic narrative. According to Clay, the *Hymns*, recounting the evolution of the Olympian order, can be considered as forming a "narrative genre" characterized by a marked epic (theogonic, Olympian and heroic) potential. This view is rejected by Nagy (332–3), according to whom the concept of "genre" is not applicable to the hymns before the age of Callimachus, when the hymnic *prooimia* finally became separated from what Nagy calls "the epic consequent," the performance of an epic on a subject other than the god with whom the song started. Clay's distinction between the *Hymns* and prayers (235–6) cannot be based exclusively on the absence of an opening address to the divinity in the second person, as Hymns 22, 24 and 29 do employ the Du-Stil (cf. Furley–Bremer, *Greek Hymns*, 1–4).

Following Clay, N. Felson ("Children of Zeus in the Homeric Hymns: Generational Succession," 254–79) highlights the dynamics between Zeus and the potentially subversive figures of Apollo and Athena in Hymns 3 and 28, concluding that the sons of Zeus channel their bellicosity to reinforce the order established by their father. Felson takes Hes. *Th.* 894 *ἐκ γὰρ τῆς* (i.e. Metis, spouse of Zeus) *εἰμαρτο περίφρονα τέκνα γενέσθαι*, "for it was destined that *exceedingly* wise children would be born of her," as alluding to a potential future menace coming from the offspring of Zeus,<sup>5</sup> but *περίφρων* does not contain *per se* any idea of excess, the offspring of Metis being "wise," "very thoughtful" by definition.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. already F.A. Paley, *The Epics of Hesiod* (London, 2nd ed. 1883) 265.

Some minor points: 56: a further reference to the Eleusinian hero Triptolemus, probably as the recipient of gift of corn, may be found in another anonymous hexameter text transmitted by P.Amherst II 16 *recto* (Oxyrhynchus, second century A.D.). — 74: “all over the fruitful earth” is not reflected in the Greek text. — 94 n. 43: read *γωναί*. — 106 n. 38: delete p. 31. — 107: the works by Porter, Podbielski, Lenz and Vernant are not cited in the footnotes. — 112: the motif of Aphrodite born from the foam is attested not only in the Hesiodic *Theogony* and in the sixth *Homeric Hymn*, but also in P.Köln VI 242 fr. 1.1–2, cf. 1.33, and Nonnus, *D.* 7.226–9, 13.439–43, 41.99–102. — 168: the Odyssean *locus similis* was already noted by Cassola, p. 575 (*ad Hymn* 19.17–18). — 180 n. 25: read 169–73. — 212–5: as a later example of theogonic cosmology, in addition to P. Derveni and Ar. *Av.* 685–703, one could have taken into account P.Oxy. XXXVII 2816 = *SH* 938. — 226: West’s reading is *δρῦ δῖο*. — 239: read ‘di una serie’. — 246 n. 54: the correct page is 136. — 303 n. 67: read “these expressions.” — 396: P.Oxy. 670 is also mentioned at pp. 9–10, 21, 32, 53, 243.

Overall, this is a detailed, learned, and exhaustive volume finally providing the scholarly community with a collection of essays on the *Hymns* successfully combining rigorous philological standards with a distinctive hermeneutical approach.

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